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## GOP Minority Undermines Rule of Law

*rylan maksoud*

After Robert Mueller was appointed special counsel to investigate possible Trump-Russia collusion, I rejoiced. I could take satisfaction that I could trust the outcome of the investigation no matter the result. Mueller is extremely well-respected, and the initial bipartisan welcoming of his appointment brought me some hope that all those in power would respect his independence and autonomy as well. I was proven wrong. Unfortunately, as Mueller's investigation has grown more serious, criminally implicating many in Trump's circle, the true colors of some in the Republican Party have started to show, and it appears their interest in preserving their power is stronger than their commitment to the rule of law, which should concern all of us who believe that no one is above the law.

Mueller's appointment was initially welcomed universally without dissent (even President Trump held back), and for good cause. *USA Today* announced: "Rare bipartisan moment: Both sides embrace Robert Mueller as special counsel." *The Washington Post* declared: "The initial GOP reaction to a special prosecutor: Positive." Rep. Jason Chaffetz, infamous for declaring that he already had two years' worth of material lined up with which to investigate President Hillary Clinton, when it seemed like she would win, tweeted: "Mueller is a great selection. Impeccable credentials. Should be widely accepted." Rep. Bob Goodlatte, House Judiciary Committee Chairman, stated, "Former Director Mueller is a well-respected law enforcement professional who served the FBI for a dozen years under both Democratic and Republican presidents. I am confident that he will serve with integrity and professionalism, and will conduct a thorough and fair investigation." Rep.

Mike Conaway, leader of the House investigation into Russian interference stated that Mueller “has a great reputation in the industry.”

There are numerous reasons why Mueller is so respected across the board. He served Republican and Democratic presidents as a prosecutor, was briefly Deputy Attorney General before becoming Director of the FBI just before 9/11, and has the courage to stand up for his convictions, as evidenced by preparing a mass resignation as FBI director in response to illegal Justice Department spying. He was so respected that he was asked by Barack Obama to stay on for two more years past his term, and obtained congressional consent. His impeccable credentials make new Republican opposition to him suspicious.

A certain segment of the Republican Party is now trying to attack Mueller’s credibility in an attempt to undermine his investigation. Rep. Goodlatte, who earlier showered Mueller with praise, has recently stated, “We are now beginning to better understand the magnitude of this insider bias on Mr. Mueller’s team.” Rep. Matt Gaetz has warned that Mueller is executing a “coup d’état” against Trump and that his probe is “infected with bias.” Rep. Francis Rooney cried out that Mueller’s investigation is “off-the-rails” and the product of the “deep state.” The *New York Times* declared: “Republican Attacks on Mueller and F.B.I. Open New Rift in G.O.P.” A minority in the GOP have started attacking Mueller, previously deemed unimpeachable, as his investigation has grown more serious.

Those who value the rule of law should be concerned. Robert Mueller is a man with a character so lauded that it was impossible to find a dissenting voice when he was appointed special counsel. Now, because his investigation is getting closer and closer to Trump’s inner circle, a certain segment of the Republican Party have shown their true colors and have launched a preemptive strike. Some have even forgotten about their previous lauding and have begun engaging in doublethink. I do not know where the investigation will lead. If Mueller ends his investigation in a few months and declares that nobody other than who he has already indicted has committed any crimes, I will be relieved.

Alternatively, if he indicts Trump’s inner circle, I will also be relieved. Justice must be blind. Quiet efforts to shield Mueller from criticism among most GOP lawmakers give me hope that this minority within the Republican Party will not grow powerful enough to pervert justice. However, its mere existence should remind all of us about the dangers of blind partisanship, on both sides of the aisles. I have no doubt that a similar minority within the Democratic Party would have emerged if similar allegations were made against a Democratic president. That concerns me and should concern everyone who values the rule of law more than preserving their party’s power.

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mueller



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